

In the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

49. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,
- (d) a passage connecting the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet ~~in fluid flow communication with~~ and the second stage cyclone inlets, and the passage is configured to inhibit settling out of particulate matter from the air stream.

50. – 57 (Previously Added)

58. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,

- (d) a passage extending from ~~connecting~~ the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet to in fluid flow communication with the second stage cyclone inlets, and the passage is substantially free of any dead air spaces.

59. –65 (Previously Added)

66. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,
- (d) a conduit extending from ~~connecting~~ the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet to in fluid flow communication with the second stage cyclone inlets.

67 - 73 (Previously Added)